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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 1, 1864. —Laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

[Presented by THE CHAIR.]

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## MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA., Jan. 30, 1864.

*To the Senate and House of Representatives :*

I herewith transmit for your consideration a communication from the Secretary of War, covering an estimate of an additional sum needed by the Engineer Bureau.

I recommend an appropriation of the amount specified, for the purpose indicated.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

## COMMUNICATION OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, WAR DEPARTMENT, }  
Richmond, January 28, 1864. }

*To the President of the Confederate States :*

SIR : I have the honor to transmit herewith an estimate prepared by the acting chief of the Engineer Bureau, of the amount required to meet the just claims presented, or to be presented hereafter, for the loss of slaves who have been impressed by the Confederate authorities, and, while engaged in laboring on the public defences, have died or contracted diseases which have, after their discharge, resulted fatally. It is estimated that the sum of three millions one hundred and eight thousand dollars will be necessary to pay such claims.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES A. SEDDON,  
*Secretary of War.*

C. S. A., WAR DEPARTMENT, ENGINEER BUREAU, }  
 Richmond, Va., January 22, 1864. }

HON. JAMES A. SEDDON, *Secretary of War* :

SIR: I have received from Col. W. H. Stevens, chief of construction D. N. V., an estimate of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) as required to meet the just claims presented, or to be presented hereafter, for the loss of slaves who have been impressed in the State of Virginia, and have escaped to the enemy, or have died whilst engaged in labor on the Richmond defences, or from diseases contracted while thus employed. This estimate is based on an average valuation of two thousand dollars for each slave thus escaped or deceased. A consideration of the losses sustained in other portions of this State, especially in the Peninsula, earlier in the war, gives the sum of seven hundred and eight thousand dollars (\$708,000) as the entire estimate for the State of Virginia. Reasoning by analogy, for want of absolute data, and extending the calculation to the other States of the Confederacy, in all of which heavy losses have been sustained among the negroes impressed for labor on the defences, the bureau has arrived at the sum of three million one hundred and eight thousand dollars (\$3,108,000) as the minimum probably required to meet this class of expenditures.

I have, therefore, the honor to submit an estimate of three million one hundred and eight thousand dollars, (\$3,108,000,) and to ask an appropriation of this amount, for the purpose indicated.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. L. RIVES,  
*Lieut. Col., and acting Chief of Engineer Bureau.*

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